

just sit with me in the dark; i'll be alright by ASkyOfKai

Series: Stoncy Week 2021 [5]

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Angst, Derealization, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, Multi, PTSD, Paranoia, Steve Harrington Needs a Hug, Stoncy Week 2021, not really relationship focused, probably counts as psychosis, surprisingly that's not an official tag

Language: English

Characters: Jonathan Byers, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington

Relationships: Jonathan Byers/Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler

Status: Completed

Published: 2021-07-16

Updated: 2021-07-16

Packaged: 2022-03-31 11:10:23

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,375

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

He yanks the phone off the wall, muscle memory taking over as he punches the buttons. He crouches in the corner, back pressed to the refrigerator, staring blankly out across the kitchen floor as he waits.

“Hello?” A tired voice answers. Steve tries to answer, but the words catch in his throat. His body is frozen, his lips barely moving as he tries again. “Steve? Is that you?”

just sit with me in the dark; i'll be alright

Author's Note:

Day 6: I called you at 2AM because I need you

Missed day 5 cause of fatigue but day 6 has been written for a month so yea.

Surprise surprise I have trauma and I have chosen to write it into a fanfic. It fits really well into the Stranger Things universe actually, only even worse! Because my trauma was just caused by a sociopath with an affinity for horror movies and Steve's was caused by actual real-life monsters! This is what I do when I love a character—I put them through all the shit I've been through. Luckily Steve has Nancy and Jonathan to help him through it. Might turn this into it's own little series too cause like why not, I can have Steve work through his trauma as I do. Anyways this just got personal so yea, enjoy the fanfic!

WARNINGS in case y'all didn't read the tags: PTSD, derealization, paranoia, psychosis probably I'm not quite sure of the definition of it

Steve can't handle it.

The darkness is always pressing on the corners of his vision, his head jolting to stare at something that *might* have been watching.

They're always watching.

The shadows and shapes that dance around his bedroom at night. He jolts up in bed, staring at the hallway, through the open door where he could have sworn he saw a figure.

There's nothing there. Ever. He gets up, he searches the whole house, knuckles turning white where they grip his nail bat. It's silent, the

floor creaks, he turns on every light as he goes. And there's never anything waiting.

He keeps the curtains closed, the doors locked. The idea that there could be something out there, that some being beyond this world is staring in at him as he sleeps, just watching and waiting is terrifying.

The dark brings images, thoughts, *delusions* into his mind. Most nights his sleep is broken, hours spent lying in bed and watching the shadows, the windows.

Behind the curtain is a three headed monster with a thousand eyes, hands stretched out to touch him the second his eyes close. *Behind the curtain is an apple tree.*

The shape by his dresser is a monster crouched on the floor, ugly and misshapen, its long neck stretching so it can watch him sleep. *The shape by his dresser is a guitar.*

The Upside Down has brought the idea of monsters into reality, the things that go bump in the night are real. He's fought the demogorgon, he's fought the Mind Flayer. If they are real, if all that truly happened, what else is waiting out there to kill him?

The night he sees a werewolf in the chip on his mirror, waiting for him to let his guard down so it can crawl through to his dimension, he stumbles out to the kitchen and breaks into his father's liquor cabinet. They're never home anyways, his parents. It's been weeks since he saw them last, his mother standing silhouette in the doorway as she shouted one last goodbye to Steve. Such is the nature of having parents that are always traveling for business.

During the day, he's fine. The monsters never attack during the day. He gets a bit antsy if he goes places without the protection of his bat, but he's fine.

It's at night, when the darkness falls, that the switch in his brain flips. If his father's whiskey is what helps him fall asleep, who's he to complain?

It's two months since the Mind Flayer was defeated.

Steve's eyes snap open.

The nightmare is fading from his mind already as he flails out of bed, the numbers on his nightstand glowing red, and grabbing his bat before racing to the kitchen. A thousand pointed teeth smiling against a canvas of black, split open 5 ways, like a beautiful, twisted flower. His heart pounds as he flips on every light, shoving the kitchen table into the corner. This room is open, the least cluttered. There's hardly any objects for a monster to hide behind.

He yanks the phone off the wall, muscle memory taking over as he punches the buttons. He crouches in the corner, back pressed to the refrigerator, staring blankly out across the kitchen floor as he waits.

"Hello?" A tired voice answers. Steve tries to answer, but the words catch in his throat. His body is frozen, his lips barely moving as he tries again. "Steve? Is that you?"

He gives up on words and makes a small noise, hoping it sounds like a yes.

"Is something wrong?" Yes. "Is it the Upside Down?" No. "Are you hurt?" No. "Do you need someone? It's okay if you do." ...Yes. "We'll be there in 20 minutes, okay?" Ok.

It's not until he hangs up the phone that he realizes the voice on the other end was Jonathan, not Nancy.

He's still crouched in the corner when they arrive. The gravel on the driveway crunches, a door slamming. There's footsteps in the hallway, then "Steve? Where are you?"

"Here," he whispers, and it must have been enough because the door opens and Nancy and Jonathan race in.

Jonathan gathers the papers that spilled off the table when it shoved it away as Nancy crouches by Steve, gently pulling him into a hug.

He freezes. They could be shapeshifters, they could be...they're his friends. They're his friends. He repeats it in his head. Nancy and Jonathan are safe, he's safe.

“Steve?” Nancy pulls back and looks at him, concern written all over her face. “What happened?”

“I...” Steve swallows, coughing reflexively at the dryness in his throat. “Nance, I’m scared.”

“Of what?” Jonathan asks, sitting down next to him. *Everything.*

“The...the Upside Down...and the monsters...and...Nance they’re *everywhere*. I can’t sleep, I know...I know they’re not real but it *feels* real.”

“Hey, hey, it’s okay. We’re here.” Nancy runs her fingers through his hair. He sees her exchange a worried glance with Jonathan. He knows they have no idea what to do. He has no idea what to do, how could they?

“What do you need?” Jonathan asks. Steve, despite his best efforts, feels tears start to well up in his eyes. He hasn’t slept much in weeks, but it’s more than that. He hasn’t been fine really since he first saw the demogorgon break through the wall in the Byer’s house. What does he need? He needs things to go back to normal, for monsters to be fake again, nothing more than the creative imagination of a horror novelist.

“I don’t know,” Steve says, and God, he can *hear* how broken his voice sounds.

“Okay, that’s okay,” Nancy says quickly, still petting his hair. It’s a little comfort, something that helps keep him grounded here, in the present. “Why don’t you come with us back to my house tonight and we’ll figure things out from there?”

“Yea,” Steve nods shakily, every movement feeling like a robotic jerk of his muscles. “Yea that works.”

He holds his bat tightly as he stands up, Nancy and Jonathan on either side of him. They leave the kitchen and Steve’s eyes dart around, searching every nook and cranny of every room they pass through. Nancy opens the front door and he tenses, staring at the dark rectangle in front of him. It’s too dangerous. It’s too open, it’s

too dark. Anything could be out there.

Jonathan laces their fingers together and Steve nearly breaks both their hands with how tightly he squeezes. He takes it one step at a time, constantly searching the space around them. He can barely see more than 10 feet away—it's the new moon—and he's terrified at what could be watching from just beyond those 10 feet.

The car is dark, but Jonathan switches on the overhead light as they slide in and Steve breathes a tiny sigh of relief. In the safety of the car, the monsters can't reach him.

"My mom's been letting me and Jonathan sleep in the same room since I told her everything," Nancy says as they pull up to her house. She twists in the front seat and gives him a small smile. "I'm sure she'll be understanding with you."

Ms. Wheeler pulls him into a hug the second they enter the house, and Steve melts into it. She knows his parents are often gone for long stretches of time, and as Steve pulls away, she says, "Stay with us as long as you need."

It's exactly what Steve needed to hear.

It doesn't stop the fear, as he settles down onto the blow-up mattress in Nancy's room. Her nightlight casts a glow on the wall that looks like a glaring face if he tilts his head and his mind conjures all sorts of ideas on what could be hiding behind the stack of boxes in the corner.

But Nancy drops a kiss on both their foreheads before getting into her own bed and Jonathan slings an arm over Steve's waist under the covers, and he smiles a little as he closes his eyes. He's safe in this room, with Nancy and Jonathan.

Things aren't better, yet, but maybe someday, they will be.